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**REMARKS BY
U.S. AMBASSADOR TO BANGLADESH DAN MOZENA
VISIT TO BANGLADESH RICE RESEARCH INSTITUTE
GAZIPUR
APRIL 17, 2013**

Joint Secretary (Research), Ministry of Agriculture, Mr. Md. Jamsher Ahmed Khandker,
Executive Chairman, Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council, Dr. Wais Kabir,
Director General, Bangladesh Rice Research Institute, Dr. Md. Syedul Islam,
Bangladesh Representative, International Rice Research Institute, Mr. Timothy David
Russell.

Good friends and fellow promoters of agriculture in Bangladesh

Asalaam 'malaikum and good morning.

We shivered in the cold that day ... some years ago ... my wife Grace and I ...

The Washington winter cold penetrated to the marrow of our bones as we stood outside
in line.

The line inched forward ...

Eventually we passed through the door of the Phillips Gallery, one of Washington's finest
art museums.

We ignored the welcome warmth and followed the crowd into the main exhibit hall ...
and there they were ...

... there they were ... over two dozen paintings from Zainul Abedin's Famine Series ...
simple, beautiful, masterful depictions of famine ... horrid, terrible, wretched famine ... famine
in Bangladesh.

The paintings told the story of Bangladesh ...
... at one time ... but no more ...

The specter of famine in Bangladesh is gone ... and I trust never to return.

In fact, Bangladesh confronts a different challenge today ... rice surplus.

The godowns are overflowing with rice, and the farmers are complaining that the surplus is undercutting paddy prices. Bangladesh may need to export more rice.

In an important sense, these are good problems to have.

Certainly, the Bangladesh once famously described as an international basket case is not the Bangladesh of today.

How could this dire prediction of four decades ago prove to be so wrong?

How could the world's most densely populated country, aside from a few city-states and island nations, come to find itself on a path to food self-sufficiency, likely within the next decade?

The answer is here, right here, right here in this room ... I am looking at the answer to those questions ... the answer is you ... Bangladesh Rice Research Institute ... you agricultural researchers of Bangladesh at the Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute, at the Bangladesh Agriculture Research Center, at the Bangladesh Agriculture University, and elsewhere ... the answer includes, of course, the Government of Bangladesh, most especially the Ministries of Agriculture, Food and others.

You have developed needed new high yield rice varieties ... you have developed saline-, drought-, and flood-resistant rice varieties.

You have developed new approaches to pest management, water usage, and fertilizer application.

You are exploring the role that biotechnology can play in developing Golden Rice, a vitamin A-enriched variety that could help address nutritional challenges. Meanwhile, your research colleagues elsewhere have developed biotechnology eggplant and potato varieties resistant to disease, thus requiring less spraying and producing higher yields.

I am proud that America has been Bangladesh's partner from the beginning in supporting Bangladesh's quest for food security, in supporting Bangladesh's ongoing agricultural revolution.

USAID, Texas A & M, Cornell, and so many other American institutions have been deeply involved in helping Bangladesh build and sustain BRRI and other fabulous Bangladeshi institutions whose critical work has made possible Bangladesh's triumphs in the agricultural sector.

This close America-Bangladesh partnership in the agricultural sector is today more vibrant than ever.

Bangladesh is the definition of success for President Obama's Feed the Future initiative ... no other focus country in the Feed the Future program can match Bangladesh's documented success under the initiative.

In south and southwest Bangladesh, where the Feed the Future program is engaged, more than 2 million farmers have used fertilizer deep placement technology on 644,000 hectares, resulting in rice yield increases of about 15 - 20 percent, reductions in fertilizer use by as much as 30 percent, and important reductions in the release of greenhouse gases.

Feed the Future has also introduced new stress-tolerant rice varieties to farmers throughout the Feed the Future implementation zone. The results speak for themselves: Thanks to the America-Bangladesh Feed the Future partnership rice production in the focus area has increased. Barisal, for example, is no longer a rice deficient district.

I have been associated with development work in one way or another since 1970; never during these many decades have I seen an agricultural development program with greater promise than the America-Bangladesh Feed the Future partnership. This partnership has three critical components: increasing agricultural production, expanding Bangladeshis' livelihoods so they have better access to food, and improving nutrition to help Bangladesh reduce and eventually eliminate the stunting of children. As many of you know, currently 41 percent of Bangladesh's children suffer delayed physical and/or mental development due to poor nutrition.

I am pleased that this Feed the Future partnership is focused in south and southwest Bangladesh, the area of the country most vulnerable to and impacted by the effects of climate change. This is the part of Bangladesh that is most challenged in terms of food security ... the part of Bangladesh with the greatest opportunity to contribute more to the nation's food security. As I close, I recommit myself, my mission here in Dhaka, and my government to ever deepening, broadening, strengthening our partnership with Bangladesh to help this great nation and these wonderful people become food secure, so all Bangladeshis have access to ample, nutritious food, so stunting of children is forever eliminated.

I hope that the new year that has just begun will be a great one as Bangladesh endeavors to achieve the unachievable, to obtain the unobtainable, to do the impossible by making Bangladesh food self-sufficient, by making Bangladesh food secure. I trust you ... each one of

you ... and your colleagues elsewhere in other research bodies and in the government ... are deeply proud of your important part in ensuring the success of Bangladesh's mighty agricultural revolution ... a model and inspiration for countries around the world.

I truly envision the day when art lovers around the world will appreciate Zainul Abedin's masterly, economical use of the brush, but will view the subject of his great paintings ... famine ... as a relic of history, lost forever in the trash bin of history.

Thank you.

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**As prepared for delivery*